

June 27, 2007

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, last week held his first meeting as Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee's Veterans' Affairs Task Force to discuss benefits available to our nation's wounded service members and their families. Representatives from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Special Operations Command were on hand to brief Members of Congress on programs offered by their respective branches.

During the meeting, Bilirakis stressed the need for veterans benefit information to be made more readily available and for more of an effort to reach out to those who may not otherwise know the veterans benefits due to them.

"Each year, millions of veterans and wounded service members join the ranks of those in desperate need of medical benefits or employment assistance, yet many do not know of the vast range of services available to them and their families," said Bilirakis. "We need to do a better job of giving our veterans access to the right kind of information to help them make informed decisions about the kinds of opportunities and benefits the federal government has made available to them and their families."

Congressman Bilirakis has taken the initiative in this effort by holding a Veteran Benefits Resource Fair in his own Congressional District, which will be held this Sunday, July 1, 2007 between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at East Lake High School in Tarpon Springs, Fla.

"In recognition of this serious need to inform our nation's veterans, I am hosting an event in my congressional district to make our local veterans - past, present and future - aware of the benefits and opportunities to them. This event is open to all veterans, their families and friends," said Bilirakis. "I encourage all of my colleagues in Congress to do the same. These information sessions can prove critical to helping our veterans discover and guide them through the often confusing and complicated processes involved in claiming their benefits."

Direct resources and representatives will be on hand at Congressman Bilirakis's Veteran Benefits Resource Fair for participating veterans to ask questions and learn how to sign up for education, employment, medical and other benefits. Tony Orlando, an entertainer and longtime supporter of our Nation's uniformed men and women, will be among many in attendance to show their support for our troops and the veterans.

Learn more about Congressman Bilirakis's Veteran Benefits Resource Fair at <http://bilirakis.house.gov> or through his district office in Palm Harbor, Fla. at (727) 773-2871.

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